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The Quarterly Review of Public Relations

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JANUARY 1959

THERE IS A PR PAY LOAD IN

Building a Favorable Corporate Image

by WILLIAM H. DINSMORE

THE concept of the corporate image has awakened a lively interest among public relations and advertising people. There has been a rash of articles in advertising and management publications on the subject. For some reason the phrase has captured the popular imagination and is being widely used and also—I fear—widely misused.

In most of the cases popularly cited as examples of the corporate image at work, there is a very natural tendency to emphasize a product-oriented viewpoint. Enthusiasts for the corporate image band wagon are able to cite dozens of excellent cases to support the thesis that the purpose of a corporate image program (including institutional advertising built around a company name and symbol) is to help sell the product by selling the company behind the product.

When such arguments for promoting a corporate image are analyzed, you usually find they are really talking about the familiar old term "brand image."

Thus, *Printers' Ink* has described corporate image as "a spearhead for marketing." It attributes a resurgence in institutional advertising to an effort to promote a clearer image of "the company behind the product," and gives as one notable example the redesigned trademark for the products of Diamond Alkali.

Similarly, Charles G. Mortimer, president of General Foods, told stockholders at their annual meeting that one of the reasons for the new Gourmet Foods Division was the belief that "a line of high quality foods such as this will contribute something to the corporate image we want to build for General Foods in the public mind. In this respect, our objective

is much like that of Ford with Thunderbird and of Corning with Steuben."

On the other hand, in some cases attempts to interpret the importance of corporate image principally in terms of brand names and the "company behind the product" run into difficulties. For example, many a company with diverse lines of packaged goods marketed under a variety of brand names has special problems when it considers associating the company name with some of its products. One Madison Avenue copy writer grappling with the corporate image boggled at the imagined slogan: "Try Durkee's Salad Dressing—by the makers of Glidden's fine paints."

Others have commented on the incompatibility of Borden's corporate symbol of Elsie the cow with their instant coffee product. Several food manufacturers market both breakfast cereals for people and kibble for dogs. The products are related in the manufacturing process, but the manufacturers assume in this case that separate brand images are preferable.

American Home Products is the classic example of a company which completely confuses those trying to understand corporate image solely in terms of product. So diverse are the product lines of American Home Products (including, for example, shoe polish, baking mixes, baby foods, headache remedies, ethical drugs, toothpaste, cosmetics, instant coffee) that it seems impossible to associate them all with a related concept of a single business.

Perhaps these few examples are enough to make the point that portraying the "company behind the product" is indeed one important reason for taking a close look at your corporate image. But it is not the whole story. And in many cases it is not even the most important part of the story.

The image of the company as a reliable source of good products and service is the one of first importance to one key public, the customer. This "product image" of the company also help shape the total image of the company formed by other key publics, such as investors, suppliers, distributors and dealers, political representatives, educators, community neighbors, and so on through the list of people having individual points of contact and different frames of reference.

Product Image Only a Part of Corporate Image

But when we began to examine the corporate image of General Electric intensively in an effort to get a complete picture of our company as it is seen by different publics from their widely different viewpoints, we found that "product image" was not the all-potent factor we had formerly supposed.

Today, as the result of three years of extensive development work by the Opinion Research Corporation, we have for the first time a picture of the General Electric Company as the public sees us in the many different aspects of the company's reputation.

In the past, as a result of a variety of public opinion and attitude surveys, we had scattered and difficult-to-relate clues as to people's attitudes toward the company. On the whole, we knew the public generally rated us high among large companies toward which they held an over-all favorable attitude. We knew that product quality and service played an important part in this over-all attitude. We knew little or nothing about how much other kinds of experience with the company affected their over-all favorability. We had misleading (if we tried to interpret them too broadly) indications of the sources of their impressions about us. For example, company share owners who did not read the annual report said they got most of their information about us from reading the financial publications. Corporate image measurements now reveal that they also had other important sources of information about us (such as product use and advertising) which also affected their image of the company as an investment.

Similarly, we had many measurements of the public's attitudes toward the company in plant communities. From these we had a wealth of data as to how people felt about us as an employer and community neighbor. But if people liked us for paying good wages and providing pleasant working conditions, we had no way of relating these factors to the company's "product image."

Four Components of a Corporate Image

If different factors had different weights in affecting people's over-all attitudes toward us, we had no way of comparing them until we had a complete picture of the corporate image in a national sample of public opinion. We now have such a picture. With a total picture, we also have the opportunity to take it apart and analyze its many components. Having made such a measurement of public opinion and analyzed it, we now begin to see that our total corporate image is made up of four principal components. They include:

1. The Product Image: How people see the company as a manufacturer and marketer. Are its products of high quality? Do they stand up? Is the company a leader in introducing new products and product innovations? Are its prices right, or too high? Does it provide good or bad prod-

uct service? Is it fair in its treatment of customers? Is it pleasant to do business with?

2. The Management-Investment Image: Is the company well managed? Is it a good company to invest in? Is it a growing and progressive company?

3. The Corporate Citizen Image: Does the company assume its share of civic responsibilities, aiding charities and education? Do its activities bolster the nation's economic strength and the national defense? Does it help small business, or does it squeeze out smaller competitors? Are its profits fair, or is it too much like a monopoly?

4. The Employer Image: How is it as a company to work for? Does it pay good wages and salaries? Does it have a good record for steady work? Or are there too many layoffs, too much labor trouble? Does it provide opportunities for advancement, good employee benefits, pleasant working conditions?

The relative importance of these four components in shaping people's attitudes toward the company varies greatly depending upon their individual frames of reference. From the viewpoint of the customer, or potential customer, the product image component is obviously the most important. But it is not the sole factor affecting their buying decisions.

Having measured the total public image of the company, we have the ability to compare our reputation with other companies' reputations both in total and in its individual parts. We find that Company A and Company B may have equally favorable product images. But Company A enjoys decided advantages over Company B because it is more highly regarded in its "corporate citizen image." More than twice as many people recommend Company A's products, even though product quality and service of both companies are rated equally high.

With this rounded picture of the public's image of the company, we can also examine people's tendency to act on other important things affecting the company, besides buying its products. Different components of the corporate image have different weights when people are judging the company:

1. For its products
2. As a company to work for
3. As a company to invest in
4. As a company to do business with
5. As a desirable addition to the local community, the state, or the nation

6. As an example of our whole business system and therefore whether the company's activities are in the public interest or should be subjected to government investigations, controls and restrictions.

We regard the total corporate image concept, therefore, as a new opportunity to plan and develop a public relations program. Measuring the corporate image (including its principal components) is really the fourth and final step in such a program. It is a new tool permitting public relations men to be more competent in their assignment of advising management in planning and carrying out the broad program.

Creating a Corporate Image

The first step in the public relations program is necessarily the final responsibility of top management itself.

This step consists of developing clearly management's own image of what the organization's mission in the world is, and the fundamental character of the organization (including the social, moral and ethical standards of action it will follow in seeking to fulfill its mission).

The second step is to put down on paper the organization's broad objectives. These define both the mission and the manner in which it will be pursued. Unless these objectives are clearly set forth so that they are understood and believed in up and down the ranks of the organization, they will never be understood and believed in by the public.

The third step is to plan communications programs which will gain public understanding and support for the organization's objectives.

The fourth step, of course, is measurement and feedback. Effective corporate image measurement should provide public relations men and management with an objective base for decisions which in the the past have been made intuitively—sometimes with excellent results, but often with rather too many errors in the trial and error process.

Even today when many companies have a set of published objectives in a form suitable for framing and hanging on an office wall, many are so fuzzy in their definition of the company's basic mission that you find executives struggling to make fundamental business decisions by a process of eliminating negatives. They tend to think through their own image of the company in terms of lines of business it has traditionally entered.

The marketing vice president of a company engaged in processing of a variety of chemical products for industry has been heard to say—in trying to defiine the scope of the company's business—"But let's see, even

if we had a brand new and profitable product, we wouldn't go into marketing a line of perfumes, would we?"

Nevertheless, the same company in the early days of developing its line of chemical products for industry once found itself experimenting with a line of shower curtains.

Business as well as public relations decisions up and down the line of management will be made much more easily when the company's mission has been made clear in writing and against a concept of the corporate image which will make sense both to the organization and to the public.

Examples of Corporate Image Formation

The late Thomas J. Watson, Sr., founder of the International Business Machines Corp., is a good example of an executive with an intuitive flair for defining his company's mission and manners in a way that made sense to the public. His son has described it this way: "In 1923, he came home one evening . . . and our business at that time wasn't very big . . . and announced he was changing the name of the company from the 'Computing, Tabulating and Recording Company' to the 'International Business Machines Corporation.' I thought that this was a pretty big name for something that didn't impress me very much. But the name itself was another indication of the early public relations consciousness of the corporation which was being carried out by our 'Director of Public Relations' —who carried the title of President. The dignity of 'International Business Machines' opened far more doors than did the 'Computing, Tabulating and Recording Company.' "

In short, Mr. Watson invented a name for the company which defined its future broad mission, which he foresaw and projected clearly to inspire the organization to set its sights high. The company's principal products at the time were coffee grinders and meat slicers, but under Mr. Watson's management it was to become the world-wide leader in tabulating machines and eventually in electronic computers.

Which comes first, the image or the result? Kenneth Boulding in his thoughtful book on "The Image" has commented on the futility of getting involved in the old chicken versus egg argument. The important thing is first to develop the institution's own image in terms that will make sense to the public, then to endeavor to live up to that image.

Very early in the history of the electrical age, General Electric had the problem of fulfilling its mission (manufacturing and selling electrical products) without having any customers for the electric power generating equipment necessary to get the whole business started. As a result, the

company had to help finance the formation of utility companies to get them started, particularly in small communities. A subsidiary company, Electric Bond and Share Company, was formed in 1905 to handle this financing operation. Later it also performed engineering and management services for local utilities.

Early in the 1920's the company's top officers, Chairman Owen Young, a lawyer, and President Gerard Swope, an engineer, both with a strong instinct for public relations, sensed that the image of a large electrical manufacturer selling products to utility customers in whom it also had important financial investments was not an image which would be palatable to the public as the company continued to grow. The decision, therefore, was made to divest the company's ownership of Electric Bond and Share Company by distributing as a bonus to its stockholders shares in EBASCO. Thus, two publicly owned and successful corporations grew in place of one—each with distinct missions in the world, missions which made sense in terms of the public images they evoked.

General Motors and the Supreme Court

There is plenty of evidence today that what really annoys some of the severest critics of big business is not mere size, but size that doesn't make sense, does not conform to their image of what is an appropriate mission for a single corporate entity, or the manner in which it should be fulfilled. Some such problem seems to have been bothering economist Theodore J. Kreps when he told a Stanford University conference of businessmen:

"Next to the Federal Government, the largest such unit of power is General Motors. It employs more people than any other business or any state or local government in the United States. More money flows through its coffers than is ever seen by the combined treasuries of 40 states of the Union. It is the world's biggest advertiser, the largest bank customer, and the largest shipper of freight. In addition to being the world's largest producer of passenger cars, trucks, auto parts, buses and locomotives, it is a leading producer of gas engines, bulldozers, washing machines, refrigerators, ranges, air conditioning, lighting, heating and water systems."

I have studied analyses by eminent lawyers concerning the significance of the U. S. Supreme Court's decision ordering the Du Pont Company to divest itself of its ownership of 23 per cent of the stock of General Motors Corp. There are lengthy debates over such deep legal concepts as the extent to which Du Pont did or did not dominate a "relevant

market." These matters were debated in detail in the Supreme Court's own majority and minority decisions.

The learned justices were diametrically opposed in their interpretations of the share of the relevant market held by Du Pont as a result of its sales to General Motors, although the facts in the case apparently were not in dispute. The majority held:

"The substantiality of a revelant market is undisputed. The substantiality of General Motors' share of that market is fully established in the evidence. General Motors is the colossus of the giant automobile industry. It accounts annually for upward of two fifths of the total sales of automotive vehicles in the nation. In 1955 General Motors ranked first in sales and second in assets among all United States industrial corporations and became the first corporation to earn over a billion dollars . . .

"Expressed in percentages, Du Pont supplied 67 per cent of General Motors' requirements for finishes in 1946 and 68 per cent in 1947. In fabrics Du Pont supplied 52.3 per cent of requirements in 1946, and 38.5 per cent in 1947. Because General Motors accounts for almost one half of the automobile industry's annual sales, its requirements for automotive finishes and fabrics must represent approximately one half of the relevant market for these materials . . . we must conclude that Du Pont has a substantial share of the relevant market."

Looking at the same evidence, the minority, however, concluded that there is no such thing as a "General Motors market."

"For many years," the minority pointed out, "General Motors has been organized into some thirty operating divisions, each of which has final authority to make, and does make, its own purchasing decisions. This decentralized management system places full responsibility for purchasing decisions on the officers of the respective divisions. To speak of 'selling to General Motors' is, therefore, misleading. A prospective supplier, instead of selling to General Motors, sells to Chevrolet, or Frigidaire, or Ternstedt, or Delco Light, as divisions. Moreover, when there are several plants within a division, each plant frequently has its own purchasing agent and presents a separate selling job.

"The record discloses that each division buys independently, that the pattern of buying varies greatly from one division to another, and that within each division purchases from Du Pont have fluctuated greatly in response to price, quality, service, and other competitive considerations. For example, Oldsmobile is the only division which buys antifreeze from Du Pont and one of the two car divisions which does not finish its cars with

Duco. Buick alone buys Du Pont motor enamel, and Cadillac alone uses Du Pont's copper electroplating exclusively. Thus, the alleged nefarious influence arising from Du Pont's stock interest apparently affects the Oldsmobile antifreeze buyer, but not the Oldsmobile paint buyer; the paint buyers at Chevrolet, Buick, and Pontiac, but not the antifreeze or electroplating buyers; and the electroplating buyer at Cadillac, but not the Cadillac paint buyer."

The court majority and minority were equally at odds in interpreting whether Congress intended Section 7 of the Clayton Act to apply to vertical as well as to horizontal acquisitions of another corporation's stock.

These were the two principal legal points in dispute in the case. But in reporting the Supreme Court decision, the New York *Times* summed it up with this leading sentence:

"For the first time a giant corporation has been told, in effect, by the United States Supreme Court: 'Shoemaker. Stick to your last.' "

In short, the *Times* seemed to conclude that the real basis for the Supreme Court's decision was a much simpler thing. What the court decided was that ownership by the world's largest chemical company of one fourth of the world's largest automobile corporation just plain doesn't make sense to the public. It doesn't fit the public's image of what is an appropriate mission and scope of operation for a powerful corporation.

Does this imply, then, that management policies and public relations programs should be tailored completely to fit the existing public image of what is appropriate? Certainly not. Our corporate image studies show that the public is often much too poorly informed and its attitudes too tenuously held for that.

Value of Corporate Image Measurement

What measurement of existing public images can do, on the other hand, is to provide a sound base for forward planning. In this age of galloping technological change, the public relations counselor faces two major challenges. Obviously, no company can stand pat on yesterday's definition of its mission. The fate of the buggy whip manufacturer is familiar to all. The first challenge, therefore, is not merely to adjust to technological change, but also to anticipate where it is leading. The second challenge is to provide leadership in preparing public opinion to accept the logic of new missions in a changing world.

Such changes involve more than new products and new competition. These are important. But in today's rapidly shifting social, political, and economic environment, there are other fundamental reasons compel-

ling corporate managements to audit continuously the public's image of them and to anticipate the consequences of new conditions.

Chairman Ben W. Heineman of the Chicago and North Western Railway Company is one executive who has keenly sensed the relationship of public images to basic issues affecting the very survival of the company. Mr. Heineman recently gave a graphic recital of the problems railroads have been having in making a profit in the face of the conflicting demands upon them by Federal and state regulatory commissions, passengers, shippers, local chambers of commerce, and labor unions, and added:

"Much of this difficulty springs from an ancient image of railroads unconsciously held by nearly everyone, including those who should know better. This is an image springing from years ago of the railroad as a natural monopoly. The original thought was that for the privilege of occupying the preferential position as a monopoly, railroads should perform all transportation services—carload and less-than-carload, passenger and suburban, through freight and way freight—whether or not at a loss."

Having recognized his image problem, Mr. Heineman is wisely not resting his case on a crying-towel approach to the public. He puts the solution of the problem squarely up to management as a first step:

"This responsibility cannot be delegated. It doesn't belong to labor; it doesn't belong to the government; it doesn't belong to the public, and it doesn't belong to our investors. It is ours inescapably."

In effect, Mr. Heineman is pleading with railroad managements to follow the first three phases of the four-step corporate image approach to public relations planning outlined above:

First, clarify management's own image of the corporate mission and character;

Second, set forth the objectives for clear understanding throughout the organization (with special emphasis in this case on the labor unions);

Third, plan integrated communications programs to "persuade the commissions," "to convince the legislatures," "to convince our friends from labor," and "to convince you, the public."

With the new techniques for corporate image measurement now available, the public relations man is today for the first time able to provide, as the fourth step, objective measurement of progress in the program and guidance when needed to bring the management and public images into closer harmony. By doing so, the effectiveness of time and money spent on communicating can be tremendously increased. ●

CASE HISTORY REVIEW

Influencing a State-Wide Public

by RAYMOND SIMON

Problem:

How to get out a sufficient state-wide "yes" vote on one of twenty-four amendments on the ballot when only $5,000 and fifty days' time are available.

Solution:

Develop a state and county organization, rely on both mass and personal means of communication.

In a nutshell, that's the story of a campaign carried out by the Alabama Polytechnic Institute[1] (known also as Auburn) in getting enough Alabamans to vote for an amendment providing $4,500,000 through a bond issue, for much needed buildings and equipment for research in agriculture and veterinary medicine. The campaign was a "blitz" affair, and with good reason: Time was of the essence.

In October, 1957, the Alabama state legislature approved Amendment 5, along with twenty-four others, to be submitted to the people for a vote. The referendum was scheduled for December 17. L. O. Brackeen, director of publicity for Auburn, stated the essential problem: "Based upon the experiences in recent years of people voting against bond issues, friends of the amendments feared they would fail."

The amendment sought by Auburn didn't fail (final vote was 116,939 to 27,992), and the reason why it didn't provides a good case study of an organized public relations campaign geared to influence a state-wide audience.

[1] This campaign was an award winning entry in the 1957 Silver Anvil Awards Competition, APRA.

Organizing For Action

Recent studies—particularly the one conducted in Decatur, Illinois, by the Bureau of Applied Social Research of Columbia University[2]—have underscored the importance of personal influence as a significant factor in the decision-making process. The Auburn group seems to have learned this lesson well.

Before setting out to influence favorably the mass of Alabama residents, the people guiding the Auburn campaign organized two important groups:

1. A state-wide Committee for Adoption of Amendment 5.
2. County committees for adoption of Amendment 5.

On the all-important one hundred-member state committee were representatives of agriculture, industry, business, banking, labor, press, radio and television. Two members of the University's board of trustees—Thomas Russell of the Russell Manufacturing Company and Frank Samford, president of a life insurance company—agreed to head the state unit. The organizing of the state committee on October 29 was used as a base for publicity stories which, in effect, kicked off the campaign. In addition, of course, the state committee directed the work of the fifty-day campaign and served as a rallying point and central headquarters.

Serving under the state committee were sixty-seven county commitees, one for each county in the state. These groups were made responsible for organizing the campaign on the local level and for disseminating information to the mass of citizens in a local manner rather than from distant headquarters.

Further, in addition to using the main groups cited above, the campaign leaders worked through important alumni groups and in close cooperation with other groups supporting the twenty-four other amendments on the ballot.

To handle the promotion work of the campaign, Auburn's President Ralph B. Draughon appointed a public relations committee whose primary responsibility was the preparation of materials to be used throughout the state by the state and county committees. This committee began functioning on October 23, and it met weekly and sometimes twice weekly during the time the campaign was in progress. Its first purpose was to devise suitable campaign themes and a campaign plan.

[2] *Personal Influence,* Katz and Lazerfeld, The Free Press, Glencoe, Ill., 1955.

Themes and Plan

Sponsors of Amendment 5 understood well the importance of themes in a public relations campaign. Though the themes used by Auburn were not as powerful as that used by Columbia University in celebrating its bicentennial,[3] they had the advantage of being simply expressed and easy to remember.

Throughout the campaign Alabamans were told:

1. Alabama's economy "rises and falls with its agriculture" and the efficiency of this agriculture depends on research facilities and progress.

2. Amendment 5 specifies that the money should be raised by bonds and not through taxes.

3. Approval of Amendment 5 would better the training of young men and women in agriculture and veterinary science.

Slogans based on the above themes were simple and effective. Those engaged in the campaign were urged to "Get 5 to Vote for 5," while the voters themselves were asked to "Vote Yes for Amendment 5 on Dec. 17" and to "Keep Research Alive—Vote Amendment 5." One of the ads used throughout the state began with the notation, "Without 1¢ in Taxes" and then cited what Amendment 5 would do.

Though no plan was written out, the basic approach used in the campaign—and this is deduced from observation on this reviewer's part—seems to have been concentration of promotion materials geared to reach publics deemed friendly to the University. As there seemed to be no organized effort *against* the amendment, the sponsors wisely concentrated on rounding up enough supporters to vote the amendment through on election day. The plan, thus, was to rally supporters, not to defeat enemies. Fortunately, the University seems to have had supporters aplenty, and it was to these publics that the campaign was directed.

Methods

Few stones were left unturned in the fifty-day campaign to reach the publics deemed favorable to Auburn's Amendment 5. In appealing to these publics to vote "yes" on December 17, the campaign promoters:

1. Printed and distributed 100,000 copies of a simple brochure, "Facts You Should Know About Amendment 5."

2. Printed and distributed 100,000 copies of a small card entitled, "Get Five to Vote for Amendment 5." These were given to the county committees and distributed widely.

[3] "Columbia's Magic Bicentennial Theme," **pr**, Oct., 1955.

3. Invited to the Auburn campus for on-the-spot coverage writers from some of the state's largest newspapers, and for those who could not make the trip sent a packet of suggested news stories.

4. Wrote spot news stories for release by the state committee and suggested fill-in stories for release by the county committees.

5. Prepared several ads suggested for use by the county committees in local newspapers.

6. Wrote spot announcements for use by the county committees over local radio stations and also prepared taped programs to be used statewide.

7. Sponsored telecasts of four of Auburn's football games on the Sunday after the games were played. Commercials on the telecasts were based on scripts explaining Amendment 5 and asking for citizen support.

8. Wrote letters asking for alumni support and placed two stories in the alumni publication.

9. Sent letters to all Alabama newspapers and radio and television stations asking for support.

10. Briefed all University employees via a letter from the president of the institution and a story in "This Is Auburn."

11. Asked for and received support from the state's farm and livestock organizations.

12. Prepared stories for inclusion in such state-wide publications as the *Farm Bureau News, This Month in Rural Alabama,* and the *Progressive Farmer.*

13. Distributed fifteen thousand reprints of the *Progressive Farmer* article for use by vocational teachers working with FFA members and others.

Conclusion

In analyzing a campaign such as the one carried out by Auburn, several thoughts come to mind.

First, though the campaign demonstrated the professional competence of the men who ran it, care was taken to avoid a "Madison Avenue" impression. If anything, the material issued by the committee seemed almost amateurish in conception and execution. For example, the sample ads sent to county committees were roughly mimeographed and the "Facts You Should Know" brochure was printed just like an ordinary election throwaway. Though this reviewer does not know whether such an approach

was deliberate, it seems like a good one to use for a university which is run with State money and which is asking for more money. Obviously, the citizenry doesn't take kindly to fancy public relations approaches by institutions they support with their taxes.

Second, though the campaign was simple in appearance, it was thorough in its coverage and execution. Five thousand certainly is a small sum for a state-wide campaign, yet the money went a long way and reached a great many people. As noted earlier, there seemed to be no written plan of approach, but certainly the underlying plan was to reach the particular group of people considered most likely to favor the amendment and thus get out and vote for it. The campaign succeeded because the organizers stalked their publics carefully, staked out their lines of coverage in broad strokes, and used both the rifle and the shotgun in disseminating pellets of information and persuasion. Result? A trophy worth $4,500,000 in new buildings and equipment. ●

* * *

"A Word in Favor of The P.R. Men"

"The privileged position enjoyed by the legal profession always has been the reason for lawyers enjoying the envy of the working journalists, and this is particularly true of newspapermen who have turned to public relations as a more lucrative source of income.

"Now I make no representation to the effect that public relations counsel be granted privileges equal with those of lawyers. Nevertheless there are many points of similarity in the two professions.

"Like a lawyer, a public relations counsel has the duty of bringing out all of the facts which favor his client and of holding in reserve such matters as would serve to the latter's detriment if revealed.

"When he carries out his duty in that fashion, however, the public relations counsel exposes himself to the charge of withholding the truth. . . .

"Murderers, traitors, foreign spies and gangsters are represented by lawyers for fat fees and because the learned counsel accepted the case he is not kicked out of his club and socially ostracised. . . .

"However, let a public relation counsel endeavor to represent a murderer, traitor, foreign spy or gangster and the poor fellow's life is made unbearable for him. . . .

"What I am endeavoring to illustrate is particularly true of public relations counsel who represent governments or individual presidents of unfavorable political complexion. The lawyers who present only the favorable side of the case in court are thought of very highly. However, the public relations counsel who finds some virtues amidst all of the condemnation is branded as a monster.

"All of this, in my opinion, is grossly unfair, un-Democratic, inadmissable, ultra vires, unconstituional and against the statutes made and provided and the peace and dignity of the jurisdiction. . . ."

—Ted Scott, columnist, *Havana Post*

The Editors' Page

pr There was a time when the enthusiasm of public relations was the building of good will. Be nice to people and they will be nice to you was the credo of the day. Good will was a broad concept, and under it the public relations man stuck his nose into a lot of things: how telephone operators responded to incoming calls; how long visiting salesmen were kept waiting in the buyer's outer office; how well the grass grew in front of the plant, and who got how much of the company's donations.

Then the building of good will was supplanted by a new enthusiasm: gaining understanding. This term was tacitly understood to mean "getting others to agree that the company was a good company and its points of view were correct." At first it was thought that gaining understanding for a company meant simply telling all about the company. Public relations men wrote score of booklets and set up innumerable plant visits.

Then a refinement was introduced by the "magic formula": do right and tell others about it. No public relations speech of the period was complete without mention of the magic formula. Doing right came first, public relations men lectured management, but it was not enough without communication.

The magic formula was sound, if not profound, but it left one question unanswered: "right" by what standards? This proved to be something of a snare. Is public relations telling us that public opinion should determine our prices? Is public relations telling us that we should set prices by what the public thinks is "right"? managers asked. Oh no, came the alarmed response, every sound business decision is a "right" decision, whether public opinion agrees or not. It is necessary to educate the public, the public relations pundits then said.

So the new enthusiasm became concentration on determinative issues. Public relations people advised one another to "pinpoint the target," "use a rifle, not a shotgun," and to become active in politics, where determinative issues could be met head on.

But, among some perceptive practitioners, enthusiasm for the determinative issues approach has never been keen. It ignores the biggest part of the persuasion job, they pointed out, because it fails to provide for building a favorable climate of credibility, acceptance and respect. It results in attempts to sell ideas like products, and that is futile. We need a more sophisticated approach, they said.

A more sophisticated concept is now at hand. Welcome to the new public relations enthusiasm, the Corporate Image. ●

EXCEPT THAT PEOPLE GET
AN AWFUL LOT OF IT THESE DAYS . . .

There's Nothing Wrong With Persuasion

by JOHN MARSTON

AMERICANS today absorb enormous amounts of *information.* Oceans of repetitious *entertainment* are lapped up daily.

But *persuasion*—the attempt to lead people to buy, think or feel—often provokes angry or frightened reactions. Readers and listeners

—insist that they are never influenced by persuasion and make up their own minds alone.

—condemn persuasion as an ignoble black art which insidiously steals away their minds and wills.

—occasionally try to strangle the persuader (especially if his views happen not to agree with those which they have previously espoused).

Now all of this is not entirely new.

These are normal reactions. They have been observed in the times of Socrates, Jesus and St. Paul. Persuasion has always been suspect because men resent the idea of change and fear the irrationality of their own logical processes.

But why is the feeling against persuasion so strong right now? Why the great sale of books on hucksters or hidden persuaders and the recent frantic lather on subliminal advertising? What does it portend?

Those of us in the business of persuasion (including editorial writers, cartoonists, preachers, salesmen, politicians, advertising men and public relations specialists, among others) would do well to take note and direct our courses accordingly.

In addition, all who work in the field of communications, where the freedoms of news and entertainment are so indivisible from the freedom of persuasion with which they are intertwined, should pay heed to this ground swell.

Indeed all the rest of us in this country (where our uncertain but

necessary task of telling right from wrong depends so much upon our free flow of facts and ideas) would do well to examine the currently popular disrespect for the ancient and sometimes honorable art of persuasion.

Past Attitude Toward Persuasion—Favorable

For persuasion has not always been regarded with disfavor. In years past, although often mistrusted, it was also admired. The great orator was hated by his foes and cherished by his friends, but fathers pointed him out to their sons and said, "You ought to grow up to be like him some day." Clay, Calhoun and Webster—even William Jennings Bryan or Billy Sunday—were names of power and romance. Any American boy who had the ability would have aspired to achieve their eminence. Persuading, crusading editors were admired as they thundered atop their mountains of newsprint. Often people actually got together to try to persuade each other. The famous Lincoln-Douglas debates took place only a hundred years ago this past summer.

What has happened?

For one thing, encounters with persuasion in the past were relatively rare and were looked upon as exciting mental treats. A man had to attend the meeting or read the newspaper or book in order to be exposed to persuasion. He decided to partake or to avoid—and instead of listening or reading, he could always choose to plow the lonely fields in silence, hammer at the work bench or eat oatmeal quietly as the lord of the family. Listening, looking or reading were certainly not being constantly forced upon his consciousness.

Our ancestors were also relatively innocent of psychological theory.

They naively believed that the ideas which they possessed were their own. Buttressed by home, church and society, they dwelt secure in their "persuasions." They understood the use of terror in changing opinions but feared no nonsense such as brainwashing. Sticks and stones might break their bones, but words were more ephemeral stuff.

Current Attitude Toward Persuasion—Unfavorable

But how is it with us today?

The trickle of once sought-after communication has swelled to a torrent and its very nature has changed. Talk seeks us out. Only a hermit escapes. Furthermore, the proportion of *persuasion* in this mighty river of communication has increased greatly. Radio and television are entirely supported by commercial persuasions, the press and magazines largely so.

Causes and promotions flourish. We are constantly aware that a thousand big and little voices daily try to influence us to do this or to think that.

Actually there are many more things today about which we *need* to be persuaded. There are so many more necessary decisions than there used to be. Fifty years ago belief in God, mother, country and a bath on Saturday night made a reasonably well-qualified citizen. Now we are expected to have convictions upon China, labor, education, physical sciences and a host of other specialties which were formerly comfortably left in the hands of experts.

Even in the commercial world a vast increase in products and their distribution today confronts us with multitudinous decisions (and their accompanying persuasions) about daily-living matters such as breakfast food, automobiles, soaps and shaving lotions.

The persuader is (and must be) everywhere in modern society. Therefore, the citizen's great and knowing dependence upon him makes the ethics of persuasion of immediate, practical importance. The modern American makes many decisions and is infuriated at being misled. Unfortunately, however, persuasional ethics are among those which have developed least since Aristotle.

Information in modern communications has behind it a tradition of journalistic objectivity, often not achieved but at least somewhat honored by the public.

Entertainment has its own taboos and censoring groups and is generally considered a desirable activity—although violence, brutality and superficiality flourish.

But *persuasion*, with the least defined ethical standards, faces the greatest temptations toward exaggeration, half truth, poor taste and plain lie.

Persuasion must aim at objectives. It cannot be impartial or unimportant.

It lives in a glass bowl. It draws attention—not only to its efforts but also to itself. It's a public trust—just as Grover Cleveland once said that "a public office is a public trust"—and not a private hunting license. And it's something about which laws should not be passed because freedom of speech also includes freedom of persuasion. "Thou shalt not's" are two-edged.

But what should be done about this ground swell against persuasion? It's a serious problem which manifests itself in punitive fringe laws

such as recent tax rulings putting a higher price upon economic-political advertising than upon goods-selling advertising, in the anti-free-speech-for-business aspects of the late Kennedy-Ives bill, and in numerous attempted taxes, regulations or prohibitions of advertising. Opinion polls show frequent support of measures to curb persuasion and a general low opinion of the morals of persuaders. Such an attitude could be turned to the destruction of free persuasive speech—and with it the freedom of all speech. Freedom of persuasion is at the root of our democracy and economy.

Thou Shalt Not's of Persuasion

What can we as "persuasion people" do to merit public acceptance and preserve freedom of persuasion?

At the lowest level would be the use of simple good taste. Maudlin sentiments over people who do not deserve them, excessive cheesecake, and overpromotion of minor matters are all examples of poor taste. There is nothing unethical about them, but their crudity irritates the more intelligent members of the public, who see throught them. Corniness, intellectual non sequiturs, cuteness and transparent attempts to hide self-interest which might as well be honestly revealed all do about as much damage as outright falsity. There is nothing worse than a clumsy persuader who obviously has a low opinion of his audience.

The next step probably consists of establishment of standards and self-policing by workers in the various branches of the persuasion arts.

In public relations, for example, the simplest standards involve relationships between counselor and client and between counselors themselves. These intramural codes are fairly easy to establish. The rub comes in attempting to establish the public responsibilities of the practitioner and in getting him to observe them.

Yet standards there must be—proclaimed, discussed and applied. Without them the opportunist "fast-bucker" grows fat to the injury of his fellows. Without standards the public cannot easily differentiate between evil persuasion and persuasion itself. We cannot categorize professions. Because some lawyers plead crookedly, we do not condemn pleading at law. Because some doctors, ministers or teachers are frauds, we do not say that their work should be abolished. Only through standards can we achieve respect.

A next step would be to cease warfare between various media and branches of the persuasion arts. It is shortsighted for television to run down the persuasive power of magazines or for newspapers to advocate

the elimination of billboards upon highways or for salesmen to belittle advertising or for advertising men to note the "intangibility" of public relations. Legitimate criticism, yes, but also a recognition that each serves in his own way with particular capacity in certain lines.

The foregoing are all "thou shalt not's." In addition positive steps should be taken.

How Persuaders Can Win Acceptance

Now would be a good time to engage in a vigorous campaign for "freedom of speech"—and this includes persuasive speech. Most of the world today does not believe in free speech; many American's don't either. Yet we live by it. It's about time we resold it. We persuaders have as much at stake as do the editors, writers and entertainers.

We ought to devise more ways of recognizing and appreciating outstanding uses of persuasion that is for the public good. Good work is being done along these lines. There should be more of it.

"Persuasion people" need to be of more public service as individuals locally, in major national needs and particularly in international relations—and we must see that the public knows about this work. As a slight digression it might be observed that the next decade will probably see the rise of international cross-cultural persuasion upon an unprecedented scale as an alternative to mutual atomic destruction. Will we be the leaders or the servants in this development?

Finally, we need to educate and encourage a larger new generation of persuasion people to be not only skilled craftsmen but also widely learned, courageous and moral men.

In final essence the ethics of persuasion are personal. When persuasion is produced by great-souled, intelligent gentlemen, it is fit to live up to its awesome power and responsibilities in today's delicately balanced, hopeful, fearful world. ●

* * *

The Villain in The Piece

"I am convinced that a great deal of this distaste for politics stems from the excesses and exaggerations of political campaigns. A warlike atmosphere prevails at most party headquarters as the zero hour nears. Genuine hostility often exists against the opposition. Furthermore, candidates often are surrounded by public-relations specialists who tend to look upon victory as an end in itself, rather than as a means of advancing broad programs in the public interest. Ethics, accuracy and propriety mean less to these men than winning a majority on Election Day."

—Senator Richard L. Neuberger, *The New York Times Magazine*, November 2, 1958

scanning

THE PROFESSIONAL JOURNALS

Each quarter Dr. Donald W. Krimel selects items from the various professional journals in the social sciences which have implications for the public relations field.—Ed.

THE "VISIT" AS A PUBLIC RELATIONS TOOL

"Cross-cultural Experience as a Source of Attitude Change," by Jeanne Watson, University of Chicago, and Ronald Lippit, University of Michigan, in *The Journal of Conflict Resolution,* Vol. II, No. 1, (a quarterly for research related to war and peace; address: Conflict Resolution, 5750 Ellis Ave., Chicago 37, Ill.)

What happens to the attitudes of people who visit a foreign society? What effect remains in the minds of persons who visit and tour an institution for the first time in an "open house"? The two questions in communication are obviously quite similar. Therefore the findings of the authors of this article, who studied German visitors to the United States, may well have extensive public relations applications.

Briefly, here are some of the things the study results indicated. Well-established adverse criticisms of one nationality group by another did not seem to change as a result of the cross-cultural contact. They seemed strengthened, confirmed. In general the visitors learned the things that their culture had prepared them to learn, and little else.

The *amount* of learning, or change in attitude, that went on was found to be affected strongly by the personality of the individual visitor. Thus it could be held that if you know the relevant personality characteristics of the individual, you can predict pretty accurately whether he will be subject to a change of attitudes in a "cross-cultural experience" and even relatively how much of a change can, under given favorable conditions, be expected.

This study indicates that in general you can strengthen attitudes visitors already possess, but you can't give them new ones in a visit. The one exception is that if the visitor considers you highly expert in a field new to him, you might affect relevant attitudes.

HOW USEFUL IS THE "BANDWAGON"?
(or: Doesn't every office have its "Norm?")

"The Influence of the Sex Composition of the Group Upon Yielding to a Distorted Norm," by Read D. Tuddenham, Philip Macbride, and Victor Zahn, Department of Psychology, University of California, in *The Journal of Psychology,* Vol. 46, Second Half.

There are those who hold that if you tell a person that "everyone else" or "most people" think thus and so, the person will tend to think thus and so also—jump on

the bandwagon. This presumption is tested, in the project reported here, with particular attention to the place of men and women in the pattern of influence.

In general the results indicated that men are pretty strongly influenced to yield to the pressure of the alleged group opinion if the other members of the group are men. They will be even more inclined to yield, however, if the group consists of men and women in equal proportions. Women, in contrast, react negatively to pressure from a group made up of other women; the fewer women there are in the group, the more an individual woman will yield to the pressure of knowing the alleged position of the group, at least on the issues used in the study.

The authors interpret the results as indicating that yielding to a "norm" — the alleged group belief—is strongly influenced by opinions about the competence of those who "generate" the norm. They presume that in this case these opinions are based mainly on a sex stereotype: the presumption that men are more reliable sources for opinion leadership. Whether men are wiser than women or not, the report here indicates that, other things being equal, they are more influential as opinion leaders, when the persuader is using the "bandwagon" device.

CAN COMIC STRIPS "EDUCATE"?

"Mental Health Attitudes of Youth as Influenced by a Comic Strip," by Arnold M. Rose, University of Minnesota, in *Journalism Quarterly*, Vol. 35, No. 3.

Start with a comic strip which has been popular copy for years in a metropolitan newspaper. Without breaking the normal pattern and flow of story in the strip, inject material intended to gain an educational objective. How effective will this effort in education be? An approach to this area of investigation was made by Prof. Rose. He tried to impart some information and encourage some attitudes regarding mental health, and used the comic strip "Rex Morgan, M.D." as his medium. The readers tested were secondary school sophomores (average age 15 years).

When readers become aware that a program intended to educate has been injected into a comic strip, are they likely to stop reading the strip? This study indicated that such awareness had no effect on the volume of readership.

When matters of fact are presented as part of the story in the strip, do they stick in the minds of the readers? Results indicated that often the facts do stick in the minds of some of the readers for a considerable period.

In general, it seemed that factual information is learned from a comic strip by only a small proportion of the readers, but the effect here varied broadly from one instance to another. On the point of whether electric shock treatment causes pain to the mental patient (the strip indicated there was no pain) readers of the strip were found to be impressively better informed than non-readers. The less precise, and less emotionally striking, question of whether a physically healthy man, with a good job and a good home life, can get a mental disease (the strip indicated he can) brought indication of some learning by the strip's readers, but far less learning than in the pain-related matter.

Both the potential and the limitations of the comic strip as a transmitter of information and as a tool for influence upon attitudes are indicated, within a limited area, by this article. Both the method of the research and the product can be of use to the public relations person in his communicator role.

SUFFER FROM "NERVOUS DISORDERS?"
PERHAPS YOU ARE EXCEEDING THE . . .

Public Relations Tension Quotient

by HARRY J. JOHNSON, M. D.

IT appears that fiction's much popularized prototype of the harried and harrassed business executive has been accepted as fact by almost everyone except the business executive himself, public relations men included. In a study recently completed by The Life Extension Foundation, only a scant 13 per cent of the six thousand executives surveyed reported that they work under constant tension, and it is suspected that a few of these "wear" tension, like the gray flannel suit, as a badge of position and achievement.

The study, the largest yet done on the subject, sought first to establish the extent to which excessive stress exists in the business world. Through a series of forty-nine multiple-choice type questions, the men were asked about their job requirements, attitudes, incentives, concerns and living habits. In this objective approach, 75 per cent of them agreed that they neither work nor live under conditions conducive to excessive tension. To one question, which asked point-blank whether they worked under constant, occasional or no tension, their subjective response was even better—only one out of seven was aware of any constant tension.

In Part 2, the study went on to determine the causes of excesive tension when it did exist. A careful analysis of the 13 per cent group by age, occupation and job demands ruled out these factors as basic causes, but when their attitudes toward their jobs, business associates and personal conditions were studied, it became quite evident that tension is identified with the personality of the individual executive and stems from within the man himself rather than from the outer forces of his living or working environment.

Tensions in humans are much like fleas in a dog, and a homespun fiction character named David Harum once observed, "a reasonable number of fleas is good fer a dog—keeps him from broodin' over bein' a dog." Everyone needs and profits by some tension. In business, as in every other aspect of life, tension furnishes interest and excitement, encourages incentive and ambition and promotes achievement and happiness. As long as it can be controlled in moderate amounts, it is desirable and beneficial, but when living becomes a series of crises and emotional upsets, these benefits quickly become dangers.

Generally speaking, public relations men measure up well on the tension survey. Although they scored slightly higher than the over-all average in claiming that they work under constant tension, their replies to questions concerning attitudes, incentives, worries and living habits ranged, for the most part, in the average or moderate tension zones. The accompanying chart provides some interesting comparisons between public relations men and other executives.

Public relations executives led the field in feeling that their superiors are stealing all the glory while they are doing all the work and, from an incentive standpoint, they showed the greatest feeling of "lack of recognition." Perhaps these two significant reactions are to be expected from men whose work keeps them behind the scenes and whose credit for effort must ostensibly be awarded elsewhere, but they might also be construed to indicate a very real need for continuing vigorous individual and collective association effort toward more firmly establishing the importance of the public relations function in the eye of business management. It is interesting, as well, to note the close parallel between public relations men and purchasing executives on these two points in light of the relative mutual anonymity inherent in the two jobs.

It is hardly a revelation that the study discloses public relations executives entertain via the business luncheon more than any other group of managers, including their active counterparts in the sales and advertising fields. But the finding takes on considerable significance when it is related to their noon-hour cocktail consumption, which is more than double the average for the entire group of six thousand men and ranks with ad men and purchasers among the high three. Without any attempt at puritanism, it is simply pointed out that this regular mid-day alcoholic intake does nothing more than contribute to a reduced productivity for the

LIFE EXTENSION FOUNDATION —Survey on Business Tension

	Public Relations Executives Percent	Sales Executives Percent	Advertising Executives Percent
Percentage Working Under Constant Tension	14.3	13.8	21.3
Job Requirements:			
Homework:			
Regularly 1 or more times a week	32.2	34.4	30.4
Over 5 hours a week	26.8	26.9	23.7
Entertainment:			
More than 2 business luncheons weekly	36.3	32.4	35.8
More than 1 evening business date weekly	11.0	18.2	7.1
More than 1 week-end business date a month	7.7	15.4	8.0
Travel:			
More than 5 days away from home a month	29.9	47.6	14.9
More than 2 hours a day commuting	21.1	14.6	22.1
Attitude Toward Work:			
Bored with job	1.1	1.6	2.8
Loathe homework	21.3	20.1	24.1
Do not enjoy business luncheons	15.0	13.4	22.8
Dislike business entertainment	21.3	17.5	30.8
Say they are working too hard	28.4	16.9	26.2
Attitude Toward Business Associates:			
Dislike of someone with whom they work	20.5	17.2	24.6
Feel that superior is stealing all the glory	9.2	4.8	4.1
Cannot express self to associates (especially superiors)	1.1	1.5	.8
Say tension is due to personalities of superiors	24.7	25.4	20.5
Incentive:			
Feel insecure in job	11.2	16.5	11.4
Dissatisfied with business progress	6.8	6.7	6.1
Feel a lack of recognition	9.9	3.7	9.8
Believe wife dissatisfied with progress	4.8	6.7	5.5
Worries:			
Have unusual worry about personal health	21.5	17.0	23.1
personal finances	21.8	23.4	26.0
office problems	20.5	25.5	32.6
home problems	15.6	12.1	20.6
Living Habits:			
Sleep:			
Sleep restlessly	5.6	5.8	6.0
Average 6 hours or less a night	8.9	12.6	16.4
Recreation:			
Exercise infrequently	53.9	52.3	44.3
Have no hobby	38.6	36.3	32.0
Have no extra-curricular interests	56.3	54.3	54.1
Eating:			
Are on special diets	12.1	14.2	18.4
Drink more than 3 cups of coffee daily	34.1	43.7	40.2
Smoking:			
*Smoke more than 1 pack of cigarettes daily	57.4	68.3	69.6
Drinking:			
Regularly have cocktail at luncheon	20.7	12.7	35.0

*Of those who smoke cigarettes.

COMPARATIVE HIGHLIGHTS

Advertising Executives Percent	Financial Executives Percent	Production Executives Percent	Engineering Executives Percent	Personnel Executives Percent	Purchasing Executives Percent	General Management Percent	Survey Total Percent
21.3	15.0	12.9	9.8	16.4	13.7	13.6	13.3
30.4	23.0	22.6	26.2	29.5	28.9	29.6	30.0
23.7	20.4	18.1	22.9	27.0	16.9	25.9	25.8
35.8	15.5	8.4	10.6	14.8	31.8	25.8	19.9
7.1	7.6	6.0	2.9	11.4	9.6	9.9	11.0
8.0	7.4	4.3	5.8	9.4	6.8	9.0	10.3
14.9	18.6	20.1	30.0	38.6	12.0	27.5	30.6
22.1	20.6	9.8	23.3	27.0	39.4	12.4	17.4
2.8	.5	2.4	1.1	1.4	0.0	1.2	1.3
24.1	25.9	22.8	17.3	18.3	27.3	19.0	20.5
22.8	24.4	24.3	20.3	21.6	19.8	23.4	21.0
30.8	30.0	31.5	30.6	19.8	31.2	27.0	25.3
26.2	20.9	21.2	25.8	20.1	24.8	21.4	21.5
24.6	17.4	19.4	18.5	21.1	22.8	14.9	18.2
4.1	6.6	4.5	6.6	6.8	11.9	4.3	5.6
.8	.8	.3	.8	2.0	0.0	1.0	1.1
20.5	25.3	23.7	24.9	31.6	38.5	24.6	25.4
11.4	14.4	13.2	13.0	14.9	17.3	13.7	14.3
6.1	5.7	5.8	7.9	8.2	8.6	5.5	6.5
9.8	6.1	8.5	9.0	8.3	8.3	4.6	6.2
5.5	6.8	8.4	4.6	6.5	8.1	5.8	6.4
23.1	14.6	24.2	15.8	12.0	14.9	16.3	17.9
26.0	27.2	22.2	13.8	18.9	20.4	17.8	20.6
32.6	27.6	21.3	22.1	23.0	26.4	26.9	25.9
20.6	14.0	14.3	14.8	10.3	11.0	12.7	14.2
6.0	5.0	5.1	4.6	4.0	1.9	6.7	6.0
16.4	12.8	14.9	11.2	14.1	14.4	12.7	13.4
44.3	50.4	51.0	49.0	52.7	43.7	53.4	52.2
32.0	44.8	29.6	28.6	38.6	33.3	38.6	37.8
54.1	50.9	50.7	45.9	45.3	45.5	49.1	50.2
18.4	10.4	17.1	14.9	10.7	14.6	12.3	13.7
40.2	40.1	40.3	31.7	42.6	39.4	40.7	39.9
69.6	64.4	71.4	65.8	60.4	59.6	65.1	66.0
35.0	7.8	6.9	7.0	5.8	24.4	7.6	10.0

balance of the day and would be better postponed for that hour of relaxation after the day's work is done.

Public relations men fall short in each area of recreation—exercise, hobbies and outside interests. We can reconcile this void with their above-average business homework requirements, but job demands which constantly cut into the hours of the day normally reserved for relaxation and diversion are certainly not consistent with continued health and well-being.

To the question "Do you think you are working too hard?" 28.4 per cent of the public relations executives answered "yes"—the highest affirmative response of all eighteen vocational groups covered by the survey. We can offer no criticism of hard work just as long as it is not carried on to the exclusion of sound living habits, but since an above-average 21.5 per cent of the public relations executives also reported unusual worries about their health, an investigation of these habits seems in order. Why not take a moment now and check yours?

Sleep: You need at least seven hours each night. Few people can get along on less.

Exercise: A bare minimum is twenty minutes of walking three times a day. Chances are good you're not getting half this amount.

Recreation: Everyone needs a change of pace at the end of each work day. Have you a hobby or an interest to which you can turn for this refreshing diversion?

Diet: Weight control is the key to good health. Do you know what your normal weight should be and are you keeping it there? ●

* * *

Silver Anvil Awards Competition

Deadline for entries in the fifteenth annual Silver Anvil Awards Competition is March 1, 1959. Any person, firm, group, corporation, association or other organization engaged in the practice of public relations, or maintaining full-time operational functions of a public relations nature, or whose principal endeavors included specific activities of a direct public relations character between January 1, 1958, and December 31, 1958 may enter what they consider to be their outstanding 1958 public relations program. Entry fee is $25. Details from Silver Anvil Awards Competition, American Public Relations Association, 1010 Vermont Avenue, N.W., Washington 5, D. C.

Awards will be made at the APRA annual meeting, May 6-8, 1959, Diplomat Hotel, Miami Beach, Florida.

BOOK REVIEWS

HOW TO BE A VISIBLE PERSUADER

THE ORDER OF PRESENTATION IN PERSUASION
Edited by CARL I. HOVLAND, *Yale University Press, New Haven: 1957, 186 pp., $4.00*

THE ART OF PERSUASION
By WAYNE C. MINNICK, *Houghton Mifflin Co., Boston: 1958, 287 pp., $5.50*

> "The public-relations job that faces Nixon will be the most difficult one he has yet known. If he is to be convincing to the voters, he must maintain the center stage while not creating the impression of always being on stage. He must achieve the highest form of art—the art that appears artless. He must project the image of the new or newer Nixon (depending on where you're starting from) while not appearing to be tinkering with the slide projector." *

What Mr. Nixon needs, perhaps, is a package of those little booklets that salesmen cherish so dearly: "Seven Ways To Close The Sale," "You Have To Ask For The Order," "How To Handle Objections," or "What To Do When The Customer Says No." Certainly, he is in good company. For what is really bothering the Vice President, the practitioners of the hard and soft sells, and the whole profession of public relations is simply how to master the fine art of persuasion.

Now persuasion has invoked an inordinate amount of hysteria, especially among some latter-day Menckens who have made profitable careers of viewing with alarm. In the critical views, it is a dirty word that carries overtones of invisibility, manipulation and insidiousness. And it is a practice that is supposed to force the American public, composed by implicit assumption largely of Boobs and Yahoos, to vote, to say things, and to buy things against its will.

Thanks at least to the Ford Motor Co., there is ample proof that this is nonsense. The many millions spent promoting the Edsel would seem to indicate that when the American public is not inclined to cooperate, all the hidden persuaders stacked end on end cannot pile up a success. The Edsel experience does not, of course, give brain-washers free rein, nor

* Cater, D., "Who is Nixon?", *Reporter Magazine,* November 27, 1958, p. 12.

does it absolve public relations from facing the ethical and moral implications of persuasion. But within the periphery set by those implications, the question nevertheless remains: How can we persuade more effectively? Fortunately, the social scientists have increasingly been providing some sensible answers. Unfortunately, public relations has obviously not been paying much attention. In over a year, Hovland's *Order of Presentation* has shamefully been considerably less than a publishing success.

This book is the first of a series (a second is due in the spring) reporting the efficacy of communications in changing attitudes and behavior. Hovland and his associates at the Yale Institute of Human Relations have been busy looking for the practical solution to a very practical problem: When and in which order do you tell what and to whom? Is there a "law of primacy in persuasion"?, a "law of recency"? Is the persuasiveness of a communication altered by the order in which desirable material is presented? Should a communication present both sides of a debatable question? When should the *pro* receive emphasis? When ought the *con* to be included?

Working from carefully controlled experiments, the Yale researchers have reached a series of conclusions that have immediate value for all communicators. For example: "When a series of communications, some desirable to the recipient and others undesirable, are to be transmitted, it will be more effective for the desirable to precede the undesirable than to reverse the order." For another example, "In order to specify which communication channel would be more effective, it would be necessary to specify for the given situation whether the main obstacle to opinion change lay in comprehension or in acceptance."

Altogether, *Order of Persuasion* is indispensable to anyone who wants to sway an opinion or change an attitude, despite a too thorough explanation of methodology and an occasional quibble. In ignoring it so far, public relations has done itself a disservice it cannot afford.

But where Hovland's book treats only one aspect of the business of effective communication, Minnick's *Art of Persuasion* is comprehensive, highly readable, and altogether persuasive. Indeed, few brighter spots have appeared on the public relations horizon, and if any fault is to be found with the *Art of Persuasion,* it belongs to the publisher, who should have issued this book as a handbook with a thumb index.

Initially, two qualifications need to be made: One, Minnick has

written primarily for speechwriters and makers; two, he is reporting and qualifying material that stems originally from innumerable reports and research studies in many disciplines. Both facts contribute to intelligibility and adaptability which should endear him to the public relations practitioner who must read while he runs.

For Holmes' "marketplace of ideas" Minnick has substituted what he calls the "arena of competing persuasions." And persuasion, Minnick writes, "is discourse, written or oral, that is designed to win belief or stimulate action by employing all the factors that determine human behavior." In what amounts to a 300-page short course in the latest findings of the social sciences, the *Art of Persuasion* describes, illustrates and amplifies the "factors that determine human behavior" and the part they play in persuasion.

The need for a communication to compete effectively with other distractions, the part that individual perception plays, the importance of group opinion and its involvement with individual personality and prestige, the niceties of argument, the reinforcement that personal experience can lend to a communication or the hurdles it can offer, the relationship between credibility and personal wants and values, the emotional factors that determine favorable responses and attitude change—these are Minnick's well-mapped check points through which an effective communication must run.

Persuasion does not, however, go scot free in *The Art of Persuasion.* Its most serious weakness, Minnick writes, is that "it will not yield trustworthy results unless all parties to a controversy are able to present their views with approximately equal skill." And by equal skill, he seems to mean equal access to the techniques, which, after all, is the nub of the ethics of persuasion. While Minnick's solution will not satisfy the hysterical, it is nevertheless consistent with two hundred years of historical development which has relied on individual initiative until the individual has transgressed the public interest. Once the persuader has assured himself "as well as he can of the soundness of his position, he may use such ethically neutral methods as suggestion, emotional excitation and the like in ways which are consistent with and can be defended by reliable evidence and sound reasoning."

In short, *The Art of Persuasion* comes as close as public relations is likely to get to "How To Close The Sale." —Don Colen

JOURNALISM TOMORROW

By WESLEY C. CLARK, *Syracuse University Press, Syracuse, N. Y.: 1958, 133 pp., $4.00.*

Where is American journalism going? In this book ten Syracuse University faculty members have attempted informed guesses at the answer to that question. Newspapers, broadcasting, magazines, advertising, syndicates, "photojournalism," and mass communications research are considered separately.

For public relations people, the book is particularly significant in two respects. First, public relations is almost totally ignored in this treatment of American journalism. There has been much recent debate as to whether public relations should be considered a part of journalism for such purposes as fraternal organization and university curriculum development. The Syracuse men would appear to feel that public relations is not journalism.

The book's second factor notable for public relations implications is the chapter on the future of mass communications research, written by William P. Ehling, who happens to be the teacher of public relations at Syracuse. He has done a searching, sensible job. It is one in which many a public relations man, gingerly approaching such heady stuff as motivational research, should find clarifying perspectives. There is no attempt at comprehensive description of communications research, but the current problems of the field are described intelligently and—wonder of wonders—in readable prose.

Many are the words that tumble about in the mass communications research area. Ehling feels that the field's current problems center around looking into the meanings of some of the phrases so glibly said. What do we mean by "mass," for example, in "mass communication?" And where is the line between "journalism research" and "mass communication research"? And where does impersonal communication end and interpersonal communication start?

Advancement of public communication research so far has been largely in method, Ehling points out, rather than in "quality of theory" or in comprehensive definition. He does not think that we who are interested in the progress of communications research should soon expect the "all-embracing structure of a major synthesis." He asks, however, for a

next step in which we get a set of sound generalizations, limited and modest in scope.

Ehling is disturbed about the possibility, suggested by present trends, that those engaged in "journalism research" will be unable to avoid "becoming displaced behavioral scientists with only a polite interest in journalism." Isn't that development inevitable? Communications research has a grand potential for journalism, but journalism doesn't own it. It might be seen to have far greater potential for the arts of persuasion generally, and for public relations. —D. W. K.

BACON'S PUBLICITY CHECKER

R. H. Bacon Company, Chicago, 1958, 7th Annual Edition, 336 p., $18.00

Bacon's Publicity Checker has become a standard publicity tool for all practitioners wishing to reach the vast business, farm and consumer periodical field. There are 3,450 of these magazines listed ranging from the mass publications like the *Saturday Evening Post* to such specialized magazines as the *National Rabbit Raiser,* (32,400 circulation by the way).

As in previous editions, each publication listed in the *Publicity Checker* has been coded by its own editor as to the types of publicity release material he wants and uses. Therefore, it is possible for a user to know what publications want releases on new products, trade, literature, personnel news, etc. Alphabetical indices of both market classifications (99 in all) and publication listings are included. There are also many cross references for easy location of publications. Each market group incorporates an introduction which serves as a general guide to the market. The book is designed as a working tool, with spiral plastic binding and convenient spaces beside each listing for notations.

There are two new features in the current edition. The first of these is a new coding in the form of a bullet which shows at a glance whether or not any given publication makes a charge for engravings made from photographs accompanying a press release. The other new feature is the identification by a star of all listings which have been changed from the previous edition.

OTHER PUBLICATIONS OF INTEREST

THE FEATURE WRITER'S HANDBOOK

By STEWART HARRAL, *University of Oklahoma Press, Norman, 1958, 344 pages. $5.00.*

PUBLIC RELATIONS AND THE EMPIRE STATE

By BERNARD RUBIN, *Rutgers University Press, New Brunswick, N.J., 1958, 357 pages. $7.50.*

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IN AND ABOUT THIS ISSUE

The concept of the "corporate image" has been receiving increasing attention not only in public relations literature and meetings, but in various management publications. Just how this concept developed is explained by **William H. Dinsmore** in his article "Building the Corporate Image" (page 1). That the corporate image is not some new fad like the hula hoop is established by Mr. Dinsmore as he traces the rise of big business over the past thirty years. A Princeton graduate, Mr. Dinsmore was a newspaper man before joining the General Electric public relations department in 1939. In his two decades with the company he has had writing and managerial assignments in nearly all phases of public relations communications. Since 1955 he has been manager of research for public and employee communications.

* * *

The value of public relations case studies to the practitioner has long been recognized. Too often, however, a prime ingredient for the successful application of the experience described is an enormous budget. It is refreshing to read **Raymond Simon's** account of a recent campaign which cost only $5,000 and floated a $4,500,000 bond issue. "Influencing a State-Wide Public" (page 11) is an analysis of an award winning entry in the APRA 1957 Silver Anvil Awards Competition. Prof. Simon is in charge of the degree program in public relations at Utica College of Syracuse University. He has written numerous articles on public relations for national publications, including "Missing Ingredients in PR Education" in the April, 1957 issue of **pr.** He has just completed a book of cases on public relations and publicity which will be published in the spring.

* * *

The furor over the alleged sins of the "persuaders" has temporarily blinded many people from recognizing the role and function of persuasion. In "There's Nothing Wrong With Persuasion" (page 17) **John Marston** puts the argument back into perspective. Mr. Marston has had a variety of experience in the public relations field which lends authority to his words. He has been promotion manager of the Des Moines **Register and Tribune,** public relations director of the department of journalism at Drake University, promotion manager of the St. Louis **Star-Times,** and founder and managing editor of **Pet Milk Magazine.** At present he is both assistant dean for continuing education at Michigan State University's College of Communication Arts, and an associate professor of the College where he teaches public relations. Apart from his university duties, he is founding a public relations association of Central Michigan.

* * *

Various observers have noted that a characteristic of public relations men is a feeling that they are unappreciated and misunderstood. Now comes some evidence seeming to substantiate this general notion of insecurity. A survey by The Life Extension Foundation attempted to measure the degree of tension and stress among six thousand executives from various fields. Public relations executives led the field in feeling that their superiors are stealing all the glory and that they suffer from "lack of recognition." However, contrary to drug store fiction, only 14% of the public relations executives were aware of working under constant tension. In "Public Relations Tension Quotient" (page 24). **Dr. Harry J. Johnson** describes the findings about public relations men in relation to other kinds of executives.

* * *

Again, speaking of persuasion, current popular writing has neglected the research which has been conducted recently by the social scientists on this subject. In "How To Be a Visible Persuader" (page 29) Book Editor **Don Colen** examines books by Carl I. Hovland and Wayne C. Minnick which deserve the attention of the thoughtful public relations practitioner.

* * *

In the October issue we inadvertently neglected to give credit to **Mrs. Patricia Rochelle** who compiled the research which was the basis for **Dr. Alan Scott's** article, "Public Relations in Texas."

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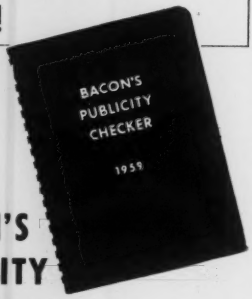

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